

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 PM-03 NSC-05 SS-15

/055 W

----- 022735

R 231354Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2238

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 4354

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, SP

SUBJ: APPOINTMENT OF SOLIS TO HEAD NATIONAL MOVEMENT

REF: A. MADRID 4079 B.MADRID 4175

SUMMARY: SOLIS WAS INSTALLED MINISTER SEC GEN OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT JUNE 20. FRANCO REPORTEDLY NAMED HIM AGAINST ARIAS' DESIRES IN MOVE WHICH HAS UNDERCUT PREMIER. EFFECTS OF THIS APPOINTMENT ON POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONISM EXPERIMENT UNCLEAR, ALTHOUGH SOLIS WAS FIRST SUPPORTER OF SUCH A MOVE IN 1969. ARIAS NOW FACES PROSPECTS OF A MINISTER SEC GEN OF MOVEMENT WHO IS KNOWN TO ASPIRE TO POSITION OF PREMIER, WHO HAS DIRECT CHANNEL TO FRANCO, AND POWER BASE IN MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY

1. JOSE SOLIS RUIZ, NEWLY DESIGNATED AS MINISTER SEC GEN OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN WAKE OF JUNE 12 DEATH OF HIS PREDECESSOR (REF B), WAS SWORN IN JUNE 20. SURPRISING SELECTION OF SOLIS, WHO SERVED IN SAME CABINET POST 1957-69, IS STILL CAUSING POLITICAL SHOCK WAVES. FACT HIS APPOINTMENT REPORTEDLY WAS MADE DIRECTLY BY FRANCO AGAINST ARIAS' DESIRES HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN BADLY RECEIVED BY ARIAS, WHO FEELS HE HAS BEEN UNDERCUT. BEST INDICATIONS
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ARE THAT FRANCO CHOSE SOLIS BECAUSE OF HIS PREFERENCE FOR

FAMILIAR AND LOYAL COLLABORATOR FROM PAST IN THIS
IMPORTANT POST DURING UNCERTAIN PERIOD.

2. SOLIS IS CONSIDERED A SHREWD POLITICIAN AND ONE OF
EARLIEST SUPPORTERS OF LIBERALIZATION IN PAST, NOTWITH-
STANDING HIS CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH FRANCO. IN LATE
1960'S WHEN SOLIS HEADED BOTH NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND
SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION (SSO), HE INITIATED TWO
LIBERAL PROPOSALS, BOTH SUBSEQUENTLY VETOED BY FRANCO:
(A) ORIGINAL 1969 DRAFT STATUTE PROVIDING FOR POLITICAL
ASSOCIATIONS, AND (B) 1968 PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE FOR AN
ELECTED PRESIDENT TO HEAD SSO. ALTHOUGH HIS APPOINTMENT
IS VIEWED BY MANY AS A MANEUVER BY FRANCO TO MAINTAIN
STATUS QUO, SOLIS HAS OFTEN DEMONSTRATED FLEXIBILITY TO
BEND WHICHEVER WAY PREVAILING WIND WAS BLOWING IN
ACCORDANCE WITH HIS POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM. AN INDICATION
OF THE DIRECTION IN WHICH HE INTENDS TO TAKE
NATIONAL MOVEMENT WILL BE REFLECTED BY HIS CHOICE FOR
NO. 2 MOVEMENT POSITION, I.E., OF VICE SECGEN, ALTHOUGH
IT IS POSSIBLE HE MAY LEAVE PRESENT INCUMBENT, ALDOLFO
SUAREZ, IN THAT POST FOR A FEW MONTHS FOR SAKE APPERANCE
OF CONTINUITY.

3. EFFECT SOLIS APPOINTMENT WILL HAVE ON POLITICAL
ASSOCIATIONISM EXPERIMENT, NOW MIRED DOWN IN PROLIFERATION
OF INCIPIENT WOULD-BE POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS, IS UNCLEAR.
SOLIS HIMSELF HAS BEEN ONE OF PRINCIPAL PROMOTERS OF "UNION
DEL PUEBLO", POLITICAL ASSOCIATION GROUPED AROUND VARIOUS
NATIONAL MOVEMENT FIGURES. THIS IN-HOUSE MANEUVER HAS
ALREADY STARTED TO BRING ALLEGATIONS SOLIS IN HIS NEW
CAPACITY COULD NOT POSSIBLY BE IMPORTIAL AND HAS A VESTED
INTEREST IN SEEING "UNION" PROSPER AT EXPENSE OF OTHERS.
HOWEVER, A CONTRARY, ALTHOUGH LESS PREVALENT, VIEW IS THAT
BECAUSE OF HIS ENERGY AND HIS PAST AND CURRENT ENTHUSIASM
OVER POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS, SOLIS MIGHT BE JUST THE
MAN TO PUT NEW LIFE INTO POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS EXPERIMENT,
AS WELL AS INTO NATIONAL MOVEMENT ITSELF. OWING TO HIS
EARLIER COLLABORATION WITH MANUEL FRAGA IRIBARNE - BOTH
WERE REMOVED IN 1969 CABINET RESHUFFLE - SOLIS MAY BE
ABLE TO REACTIVATE FRAGA'S INTEREST IN FORMING A POLITICAL
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ASSOCIATION.

4. THERE NO DOUBT SOLIS' APPOINTMENT HAS AT LEAST FOR MOMENT
BEEN FURTHER BLOW TO PREMIER ARIAS, ALREADY FACED WITH
INCREASING FRUSTRATION OF HIS PROGRAMS ON A NUMBER OF FRONTS. ARIAS
NOW FACES PROSPECT OF HAVING A KEY MEMBER OF HIS CABINET,
WHO HAS LONG-STANDING ACCESS TO FRANCO, PROVIDED WITH A
DIRECT OFFICIAL CHANNEL TO NATIONAL CHIEF OF MOVEMENT

(FRANCO). MOREOVER, FOUR MEMBERS OF ARIAS' PRESENT CABINET WERE FORMERLY SUBORDINATES OF SOLIS; ALLENDE, FERNANDEZ SORDO, MARTINEZ ESTERUELAS, AND GUTIERREZ CANO.

5. PRINCE JUAN CARLOS ALSO OWES DEBT TO SOLIS WHO PERSUADED SOMEWHAT DISGRUNTLED BLOC OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND SYNDICAL MEMBERS OF CORTES, MANY OF WHOM WERE ANTI-MONARCHIST, TO SUPPORT FRANCO'S DESIGNATION OF JUAN CARLOS AS CAUDILLO'S SUCCESSOR IN 1969. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS IN RECENT YEARS SOLIS REPEATEDLY STRESSED VIEW THAT WHAT SPAIN NEEDED FOR TRANSITION WAS A GOVT OF "CONCENTRATION", BY WHICH HE MEANT INCLUSION IN A BROAD CABINET WITH THE WIDEST POSSIBLE SPAN REPRESENTING ALL REGIME GROUPS AND SECTORS, A THEME REPEATED AT HIS JUNE 20 SWEARING-IN, WHERE HE ALSO APPEALED TO THE NON-EXTREMIST OPPOSITION.

6. SOLIS HAS EMETGED, THEREFORE, AS A POTENTIAL POWER CENTER WHICH COULD ADD NEW UNSETTLING FACTOR IN ARIAS' EFFORTS TO LEAD GOVT. HE IS KNOWN TO HAVE ONCE ASPIRED TO BE PREMIER; HE NOW HAS A POLITICAL POSITION AND BACKING IN THE MOVEMENT, IN PARDO, AND AMONG SOME SECTORS IN SSO. HOW THIS WILL BALANCE WITH ARIAS' SOURCES OF POWER REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
STABLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MADRID04354
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750218-0661
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750625/aaaaawnq.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MADRID 4079, 75 ADRID 4175
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <28 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: APPOINTMENT OF SOLIS TO HEAD NATIONAL MOVEMENT
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, SP, (SOLIS RUIZ, JOSE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006